

Project Concept Paper:

A Collaborative Approach to Address the Delta's Emergency Planning, Response, Recovery and Mitigation Needs

The Delta Protection Commission (DPC) and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CA OES) have jointly determined there is a strong, compelling need to coordinate emergency preparedness and response planning for the Delta region. An array of emergency planning-related activities have been initiated recently, and without aggressive coordination there is a high potential that individual efforts will become redundant, confused, proceed at cross-purposes, and ineffectively utilize available resources. Conversely, the potential benefit of developing a strategic framework for Delta emergency work could dramatically improve time and effort for all agencies, organizations, and stakeholders involved. A coordinated strategy would allow for stakeholders and organizations to participate in a streamlined methodology that would allow multiple end-products to be initiated and aligned early with baseline assumptions, data, and goals, and thereby create coordinated policy and programs.

Recent national and regional events have underscored the need for heightened preparedness to address large-scale emergencies. Pursuing such preparedness requires the combined efforts and partnership of many diverse entities and various levels. These efforts are not easy. In our increasingly complex society, such tasks require a heightened commitment to the health, safety and welfare of our public, a dedication to innovate, and the unified leadership and vision of diverse individuals and jurisdictions. Advanced coordination is the key to jointly addressing challenging issues in emergency management.

In that context, the Delta Protection Commission has initiated a process to address Delta emergency preparedness issues. The Commission, because of its diverse make-up (stakeholder, local, and state representation), is in an excellent position to be the core organization to address these issues and become the catalyst for progressive change. The Commission's current and future efforts could serve as a model for activities throughout the region, and indeed, the state. The critical experience and stakeholder, regional, local and state perspectives Commissioners collectively bring to the challenge for this area provides the diversity and commitment that is required to address what is increasingly recognized as a regional challenge. In an area as geographically and culturally unique as the Delta, no one county or group can plan correctly on their own.

I. Statement of Compelling Need

The Sacramento and San Joaquin River Delta is a complex region. It is a confluence of cultures, economies, ecosystems, politics, and dependencies. And it is a region at risk. Catastrophic natural and subsequent human disaster could happen at any time and any place from flood and/or seismic related levee failures. This diversity and uncertainty demands proactive regional leadership. There is a compelling need for a single entity to facilitate regional problem solving that addresses myriad risk scenarios, protects Delta citizens, and respects jurisdictional diversity both as to flood fight technology and social implications. The Delta Protection Commission should lead these discussions for the following reasons:

1. The regional complexity of the Delta (i.e., multiple governmental and infrastructure jurisdictions, natural features, etc) demands unique, innovative, and unified methods to respond to emergencies in a nimble and effective manner. The current Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) provides the technical bedrock of local and statewide response however, the nuances of Delta conditions require more than SEMS offers.
2. Hurricane Katrina, the Jones Tract levee failure, and the Delta flood events of 1986, 1997, and 2006 provide tangible examples of social risk, uncertainty, and the challenges to coordinate and serve citizens during crisis-and afterwards during the recovery phase. The "fog of crisis" is inevitable but should and can be lessened by thoughtful and appropriate planning. An absence of a coordinated response places Delta citizens at heightened risk-especially for a truly catastrophic event that has yet to occur, but has been predicted for the future.
3. Coordinated education is essential to prepare Delta citizens to help themselves during a crisis until and after first responders arrive. For the first 3-5 days the Delta region will be largely on its own to cope. Pooling resources from several jurisdictions will provide unified messages, coordinated preparedness, and leverage cost efficiencies that will benefit all Delta organizations and citizens.
4. The economic well-being of Delta communities depends on an ability to be and appear sustainable. Given the inherent uncertainty of where a crisis would occur, the absence of a regional, comprehensive approach to address Delta catastrophic risks calls such social and economic sustainability into question.
5. All Delta communities and geographic areas are not the same. Some may be at more risk than others due to physical location, adjacency to infrastructure, age of structures, condition of levees, and other conditions. A regional problem solving approach needs to address and respect this diversity, offering options to communities that want choices, and autonomy to communities that do not. This approach is best lead by an organization of the Delta that understands the region and has the collective interests of the wider community in mind with an established trust relationship.
6. 'Flood fighting' is a critical component of emergency response. However, flood fighting focuses on the physical aspects of a crisis. The Delta needs equivalent methods to address the social aspects of a flood crisis. Whether it is evacuation coordination, communicating, or dealing with cross-county mass care & shelter, the Delta needs comprehensive, multi-scenario planning to protect lives and property. Such planning starts with focused dialogue. The DPC is in a unique position to advocate for many of these benefits and provide a focused voice for the regions needs-and act as a single focal point through which to build a sustainable and comprehensive emergency planning initiative.

7. The collective vision of current emergency management specialists from Delta jurisdictions is a region that benefits from seamless coordination for response needs unhindered by geographic or jurisdictional lines; an educated and informed population ready to help themselves as well as to support their community; coordinated management of flood fight crews, supplies and equipment in the Delta basin through a real-time, shared logistics system; and enhanced operability of communications systems during and event that allows for fluid interaction and response coordination. This desired condition is potentially achievable-but only if one centralized organization asserts the leadership to coordinate the diverse interests and needs of the Delta region and provides the catalyst for public safety advanced planning.

II. Emergency Response and Preparedness - Current State of the Delta

- Regionalism: the unique needs of coordinating emergencies in the Delta region are not easily addressed within traditional jurisdictional lines having the potential to divide three regions, five counties, and multiple cities and towns.
- Past successes prepares the Delta for current challenges: All counties and cities have been doing excellent work individually; together they can accomplish complex challenges in a united fashion that leverages efforts beyond isolated projects, maximizing economies of scale.
- SEMS is benchmark, but unique needs go beyond existing process: the Standardized Emergency Management System provides the ongoing technical bedrock of local and statewide response; however, the nuances of planning and responding in the Delta require innovative thinking to address.
- Education of the citizenry: critical street-level education has been diminished due to efforts and limited resources being shifted to other pressing matters.
- Collaboration is critical: Hurricane Katrina has shown us that traditional response systems in a catastrophic event can become overwhelmed-and we must think creatively and supportively to confront these challenges effectively.
- 'Flood fighting' is important; however, this is one part of a multi-faceted regional challenge. Whether it is evacuation coordination, communicating, or dealing with mass care & shelter, when looking at the Delta as a single, unique region-the need to think differently is clear. Additionally, several specific topics exist as key challenges for the emergency management community, whether flood-based or originating through another crisis such as a flu pandemic or earthquake, including: critical transportation planning during events; loss of power and utilities; addressing mass fatality issues; coordinating large scale evacuation; managing the requirements of the special needs population (languages, aging, mental/physical disability); mass care and shelter issues; limited radio and public warning communications; among others.
- Delta-wide Coordination: Pursuant to the mandated provisions of the Delta Protection Act, the policies of the DPC Land Use and Resource Management Plan, and the strategies of the 2006-2011 Strategic-Plan call for the Commission to promote, facilitate, and implement Delta-wide coordination, education and collaboration relative to emergency preparedness and response.

III. Meeting the Delta Challenge - A Cross-Jurisdictional Approach

A number of organizations have expressed support of a cross-jurisdictional approach to addressing Delta-wide risk scenarios and they see a valuable role that local governments can play coordinating

resources during a crisis. That said, a number of groups believe they can make use of the collective strength of a multi-jurisdiction, partnered approach to access and maximize State and Federal involvement/resources during a disaster and that such a partnership can open doors that an individual jurisdiction might not be able to open alone.

The following table shows this need in dramatic fashion. Many large, complex planning efforts are underway that are targeted to provide key policy, program, and organizational deliverables. Should these efforts proceed without a coordinated approach, the resulting patchwork of efforts could hamper the Delta region for years to come.

Related Emergency Homeland Efforts Underway Regarding the Delta

<i>PLAN OR PROJECT</i>	<i>AGENCY LEAD</i>	<i>DETAILS</i>
<i>Delta Visioning Process</i>	<i>Resources Agency</i>	<i>Development of Findings and Strategic Plan underway (including consideration of DRMS and BDCP)</i>
<i>State Hazard Mitigation Plan</i>	<i>CA OES</i>	<i>Re-write/update is underway</i>
<i>5-county Area Command for Flood Response</i>	<i>DPCISJ County facilitating Delta County Participation/commitment</i>	<i>Has good potential to expand in Scope</i>
<i>Regionalism Focus for UASI and other Jurisdictional efforts</i>	<i>CA Office of Homeland Security</i>	<i>Regionalism is a national and state focus for grant funding</i>
<i>Recovery Planning and Reimbursement</i>	<i>CA OES</i>	<i>Several flood events are still active with FEMNDHS</i>
<i>State Water Plan Update</i>	<i>DWR</i>	<i>Update process has just begun</i>
<i>Bond Funds for Levy Improvements (CA Flood Safe)</i>	<i>DWR</i>	<i>Funding prioritizing discussions are underway</i>
<i>State Emergency Plan Update</i>	<i>CA-OES</i>	<i>Soon to begin; for NIMS and NRP compliance</i>
<i>Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta</i>	<i>DPC</i>	<i>Policies call for Delta-wide emergency response planning pursuant to the Delta Protection Act.</i>

At a summit for local elected officials (and county OES personnel), initiated and facilitated by the Delta Protection Commission, with support from the Center for Collaborative Policy, in June, 2006, the following visions were identified-and the DPC sees these as achievable short and long-term goals of priority given the coordination efforts proposed for the Delta region:

- *Seamless coordination* for response needs unhindered by geographic or jurisdictional lines;
- *An educated population* ready to help themselves as well as to support their community;
- *A robust regional structure* for emergency response that firmly supports the health and safety of the Delta-wide community;
- *Coordinated management* of flood fight crews, supplies, and equipment operating in the Delta basin through an *Internet based logistics system* that could allow every jurisdiction to see all available resources and obtain the closest appropriate resource (either from the point of view of distance or easiest access) in a crisis regardless of political or other artificial boundaries;
- *Enhanced operability for communications* during events, to allow for fluid interaction and collaboration.

The Commission's diverse composition is an asset in its ability to successfully facilitate county and city commitment to address Delta-wide challenges and effectuate opportunities. Heretofore, such efforts by independent state and federal entities have lacked the local representation (at the elected official level) to promote and encourage commitment to such Delta-wide coordination and collaboration. Thus, the DPC is viewed as a trusted and effective avenue for successfully achieving the programs and visions noted herein.

To date, as a result of the Summit, all five Delta counties have formalized their commitment to the DPC facilitated program by receiving Board of Supervisors approval of a (1) Letter of Commitment to participate, (2) a formal Agreement of Commitment, and (3) completion of a White Paper clarifying purpose, commitment and direction. These efforts have been complemented by DPC-initiated coordination with State and Federal entities consistent with the County-drive efforts.

IV. Next Steps for a Coordinated Effort

A. The Approach

Utilizing a DPC all-inclusive approach, the most immediate task will be an Action Assessment that will evaluate the needs of these and other ongoing efforts, and seeks to identify the participants and processes that will allow for a collaborative approach to be used effectively. The second step will be to take this information and outline an initial Strategic Framework for integrating these efforts by applying coordinated techniques, meetings, and stakeholder involvement. Ultimately a fully-integrated Strategic Implementation Plan will serve as a guiding structure for current and future emergency and homeland security work in the Delta region. The benefits will be dual in nature: ongoing dialogue that will foster communication and coordination between many entities active in these projects, and, specific projects with identifiable products as an outcome.

B. Financial Agreements of Support

The primary partners in this effort that will likely provide financial support include (but are not limited to):

The Delta Protection Commission (Lead)
Governor's Office of Emergency Services
Department of Water Resources

A financial estimate for the initial project phase: approximately \$50,000.

C. Timelines and Actions

Should affirmative support move this proposal into action phases, the following approximate timeline is foreseen in the near future:

March/April, 2007:

- DPC works directly with CA OES, DWR, and other entities as needed to solidify elements of this proposal
- Receive confirmations of support from funding partners
- Craft a funding mechanism and receive funds

May/June, 2007:

- Receive approval to begin project work
- Scope details of Action Assessment process and targeted Strategic Framework outline
- Identify stakeholders' and other key participants in the effort and proceed with design